



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

V.2

MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 14, 2009

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY RESOLUTION:
CITY OF COSTA MESA'S PURCHASE, ACQUISITION, AND USE OF ORANGE
COUNTY FAIR & EVENT CENTER PROPERTY AT 88 FAIR DRIVE

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2009

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: CLAIRE FLYNN, PLANNING ADMINISTRATOR
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DESCRIPTION

The City of Costa Mesa is considering the submittal of a bid to purchase the 150-acre Orange County Fair and Event Center property located at 88 Fair Drive for fairground and event purposes. (This property is also known as the "Fairgrounds.")

Pursuant to Government Code Section 65402, the Costa Mesa Planning Commission must find the purchase, acquisition, and use of the property to be in conformance with the 2000 General Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt attached resolution finding that the City of Costa Mesa's purchase, acquisition, and use of the Orange County Fair and Event Center property is in conformance with the City of Costa Mesa 2000 General Plan.

Claire L. Flynn

CLAIRE L. FLYNN, AICP
Planning Administrator

Kimberly Brandt

KIMBERLY BRANDT, AICP
Acting Development Svs. Director

BACKGROUND

Government Code Section 65402 prohibits any County or local jurisdiction from acquiring, using, or disposing of property within an incorporated city until the City's Planning Commission can review the proposed acquisition or use for conformity with the General Plan. Adopting of the General Plan Conformity Resolution will meet the City's legal requirements with regard to the purchase, acquisition, and use of the subject property.

In October 2009, the State of California released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the sale of the Orange County Fair and Event Center property. The State Department of General Services is authorized by the State Legislature to sell real property to the general public (i.e. private and public entities).

Following is a timeline of key dates related to the sale:

Description	Date ¹
Final Bids Due	January 8, 2010
Opening of Bids & Auction	January 14, 2010
Highest Bid Recorded	January 14, 2010
Buyer's Execution of Purchase Contract	January 21, 2010
State Review and Recommendation to Legislature	January - February, 2010
State Execution of Purchase Contract (Subject to legislative approval)	March 15, 2010
Escrow	March 17 – May 16, 2010

¹ This schedule may be revised pursuant to an Addendum issued by the State of California, Department of General Services, November 23, 2009.

ANALYSIS

Sale of Orange County Fair & Event Center

The City of Costa Mesa is in the process of pursuing different options to stop the sale of the Fairgrounds. In the event that the sale of the Fairgrounds continues to proceed despite these efforts, the City of Costa Mesa is planning to submit a bid to the State by the January 8, 2010 deadline. Whether or not the City partners with the County of Orange on a bid to purchase the property is unknown at this time. The attached General Plan conformity resolution will satisfy the legal requirements for the purchase/acquisition by the City (Attachment 1).

General Plan Conformity

The Costa Mesa 2000 General Plan designates the property as Fairgrounds. This designation recognizes the unique land uses associated with the 150-acre Orange County Fair and Event Center. This property is owned by the State of California, and the City has limited permitting authority. The property is zoned I & R (Institutional & Recreational).

It is the City's intent to acquire the site with core objective to preserve and promote fairground and event uses.

Staff believes that the City's proposed acquisition of the property for fairground and event uses is in compliance with the General Plan. Specifically, the proposed activity complies with General Plan Goal LU-3 of the Land Use Element. This General Plan goal relates to responding to the needs of the community for public open space to the extent possible. Objective LU-3A encourages City involvement to ensure the availability of adequate parkland and community facilities, while taking into consideration budgetary constraints and effects on the surrounding area.

The Fairgrounds is an important recreational resource in Costa Mesa with historical significance. The Fairgrounds has existed at this location for over 60 years and has become a year-round exhibition, conference, and event center. The proposed acquisition by the City would help achieve the important goal of keeping the Fairgrounds in Costa Mesa.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), CEQA Guidelines, and the City's environmental processing procedures. Pursuant to Section 15325 of the CEQA Guidelines, this project is exempt from CEQA. A Class 25 Categorical Exemption consists of the transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or historical resources. The proposed project falls within this exempt category because it involves acquisition, sale, or other transfer to preserve lands for fairground and event purposes.

CONCLUSION

The City of Costa Mesa's proposed purchase, acquisition, and use of the Orange County Fairgrounds property for fairground and event uses is considered in conformance with the Costa Mesa 2000 General Plan. The proposed activity responds to the need for public open space and fairground and event uses in Costa Mesa.

Attachment: 1. Conformity Resolution

cc: Asst. City Manager
City Attorney
Deputy City Attorney
City Engineer
Staff (4)
File (2)

RESOLUTION NO. PC-09-

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA FINDING THAT THE CITY OF COSTA MESA'S PURCHASE, ACQUISITION, AND USE OF 150-ACRE ORANGE COUNTY FAIR AND EVENT CENTER PROPERTY AT 88 FAIR DRIVE ARE IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE CITY OF COSTA MESA 2000 GENERAL PLAN.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, the City of Costa Mesa 2000 General Plan was adopted on January 22, 2002;

WHEREAS, the California Government Code 65402, provides in part that a local agency shall not acquire, dispose, or use any real property until the use of the property has been reported upon as to conformity with the applicable General Plan;

WHEREAS, the City of Costa Mesa 2000 General Plan designates the project site at 88 Fair Drive as Fairgrounds, a General Plan designation that recognizes the unique land uses associated with the 150-acre Orange County Fair and Event Center property;

WHEREAS, the City of Costa Mesa's purchase, acquisition, and use of the Fairgrounds property for the central intent to preserve the fairground and event uses in Costa Mesa are in conformance with the 2000 General Plan;

WHEREAS, the acquisition of the Orange County Fair and Event Center property would help achieve the important goal of keeping the Fairgrounds in Costa Mesa;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), CEQA Guidelines, and the City's environmental processing procedures, the proposed activity qualifies for a Class 25 Categorical Exemption from CEQA. The proposed project falls within this exempt category of CEQA Section 15325 because it involves acquisition, sale, or other transfer to preserve lands for open space and recreational purposes;

WHEREAS, the City of Costa Mesa has no plans to increase building intensity and floor area ratios beyond the standards allowed in the 2000 General Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission does hereby find the proposed purchase, acquisition, and use of the Fairgrounds property for fairground and event uses by the City of Costa Mesa in conformance with the City of Costa Mesa 2000 General Plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 14TH day of December 2009.

JAMES RIGHEIMER
Chair, Costa Mesa Planning Commission

